

School Nutrition Association Local Wellness Policy Recommendations

Federal Public Law (PL 108.265 Section 204) states that by the first day of the 2006 school year beginning after June 30, 2006 all schools must develop a local wellness policy that involves parents, students, a representative from the School Food Authority, school board, school administrators and the public. The Local Education Authority (LEA) will establish a plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy.

Sample Local Wellness Policy

The _____ is committed to providing a school
(Local Education Authority)
environment that enhances learning and development of lifelong wellness practices.

To accomplish these goals:

- Child Nutrition Programs comply with federal, state and local requirements. Child Nutrition Programs are accessible to all children.
- Sequential and interdisciplinary nutrition education is provided and promoted.
- Patterns of meaningful physical activity connect to students' lives outside of physical education.
- All school-based activities are consistent with local wellness policy goals.
- All foods and beverages made available on campus (including vending, concessions, a la carte, student stores, parties, and fundraising) during the school day are consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- All foods made available on campus adhere to food safety and security guidelines.
- The school environment is safe, comfortable, pleasing, and allows ample time and space for eating meals. Food and/or physical activity is not used as a reward or punishment.



Following the creation of the policy, one or more persons must be designated to oversee the

SNA Local Wellness Policy Guidelines

History/Background/Rationale

Will the students of today be the first generation to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents? Does the face of a child suffering from malnutrition resemble the face of a child adversely affected by over-nutrition? Will academic success become more and more difficult for students to attain as lifestyle choices diminish a child's ability to learn?

If you know the answers to these questions, you are one of millions who are aware that discouraging statistics emerge every day regarding the general health of America's school aged population. The School Nutrition Association (formerly American School Food Service Association) was established in 1946, shortly after lawmakers passed the National School Lunch Act, allowing healthy, affordable meals for America's school children. Leaders in 1946 were not content with the level of malnutrition in America. Today, school foodservice professionals continue to build on the record of healthy, safe, and nutritious meals – as well as nutrition education.

A healthy school environment goes beyond school meals in the cafeteria. A healthy lifestyle and maintaining a healthy weight requires a combination of healthy food choices and appropriate amount of physical activity. All foods made available on school campuses should offer children nutritious choices, and physical activity should be incorporated into the school day as often as possible. The healthy, physically active child is more likely to be academically successful.

With the recent passage of the Act (Public Law 108: Section 204) requiring each Local Education Authority (LEA) to have a local wellness policy in place, the federal government recognizes that a coordinated effort by the entire community including child nutrition professionals, school board members, parents, students, school administrators, and teachers is warranted. These efforts involve adults serving as role models and community members being informed of the policies that improve the long-term health and well being of students. The LEA has a strategic role to play and now is the time to take action.

Materials provided by the School Nutrition Association are intended to assist in the development of a local wellness policy as required by law. Our challenge now is to educate our communities on choices that will ensure a lifetime of good health.



SNA Local Wellness Policy Guidelines

The following sample guideline recommendations are offered for your consideration as you evaluate the strengths and resources of your school district.

The School Nutrition Association (SNA) encourages you to take a positive and pro-active approach to this exciting opportunity to impact your students' health and their school environment.

In all aspects of local wellness, the school staff will act as role models for good nutrition and physical activity behaviors.

Nutrition Education

- Nutrition education will be integrated into other areas of the curriculum such as math, science, language arts and social studies.
- The staff responsible for nutrition education will be adequately prepared and participate regularly in professional development activities to effectively deliver an accurate nutrition education program as planned. Preparation and professional development activities will provide basic knowledge of nutrition, combined with skill practice in program-specific activities and instructional techniques and strategies designed to promote healthy eating habits. (1)
- Nutrition education information will be reviewed by a qualified, credentialed nutrition professional (e.g. School Food and Nutrition Specialist, (SFNS), a Registered Dietitian (R.D), who is specialized in school-based nutrition)
- The school cafeteria serves as a “learning laboratory” to allow students to apply critical thinking skills taught in the classroom.
- Nutrition education will involve sharing information with families and the broader community to positively impact students and the health of the community. (7)

- School district(s) will provide information to families that encourage them to teach their children about health and nutrition and to provide nutritious meals for their families. (10)
- Students will be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast.

Physical Activity

- Physical activity will be integrated across curricula and throughout the school day. Movement can be made a part of science, math, social studies and language arts.
- Physical education courses will be the environment where students learn, practice and are assessed on developmentally appropriate motor skills, social skills and knowledge. (1)
- Policies ensure that state-certified physical education instructors teach all physical education classes. (1)
- Policies ensure that state physical education classes have a student/teacher ratio similar to other classes. (1)
- Time allotted for physical activity will be consistent with research, national and state standards. For example, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education includes recommendations for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of physical activity per day for children 5 to 12 years of age. Children should have several opportunities for physical activity lasting 15 minutes or more approximately every two hours, especially during the daytime hours. (2)
- Provide a daily recess period, which is not used as a punishment or a reward. Consider planning recess before lunch since research indicates that physical activity prior to lunch can increase the nutrient intake and reduce food waste.
- Physical activity participation will take into consideration the “balancing equation” of food intake and physical activity.
- Physical education includes the instruction of individual activities as well as competitive and non-competitive team sports to encourage life-long physical activity. (10)
- Adequate equipment is available for all students to participate in physical education. Physical activity facilities on school grounds will be safe.

- The school provides a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activity for all students, including those who are not athletically gifted. (1)
- Information will be provided to families to help them incorporate physical activity into their student's lives.
- Schools are encouraged to provide community access to and encourage students and community members to use the school's physical activity facilities outside of the normal school day. (10)
- Schools encourage families and community members to institute programs that support physical activity, such as a walk to school program.(1)

Other School Based Activities

- After-school programs will encourage physical activity and healthy habit formation. (10)
- Local wellness policy goals are considered in planning all school-based activities (such as school events, field trips, dances, and assemblies).
- Support for the health of all students is demonstrated by hosting health clinics, health screenings, and helping to enroll eligible children in Medicaid and other state children's health insurance programs.
- Schools organize local wellness committees comprised of families, teachers, administrators, and students to plan, implement and improve nutrition and physical activity in the school environment.

National Guidelines for All Foods on Campus

- All foods made available on campus will comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans:
 - Vending machines
 - A la carte
 - Beverage contracts
 - Fundraisers
 - Concession stands
 - Student stores
 - School parties/celebrations
- Food providers will take every measure to ensure that student access to foods and beverages meets federal, state and local laws and guidelines. Food providers will offer a variety of age appropriate healthy food and beverage selections for elementary schools, middle schools and high schools.
- Nutrition information for products offered in snack bars, a la carte, vending and school stores is readily available near the point of purchase.
- Families, teachers, students and school officials are engaged in choosing the competitive food selections for their local schools.
- Promotional activities will be limited to programs that are requested by school officials to support teaching and learning. All promotional activities in schools will be connected to activities that encourage physical activity, academic achievement or positive youth development and are in compliance with local guidelines.



- Food providers will be sensitive to the school environment in displaying their logos and trademarks on school grounds.
- Classroom snacks feature healthy choices.⁽⁵⁾
- Nutrition education is incorporated during classroom snack times, not just during meals. Foods and beverages sold at fundraisers include healthy choices and provide age appropriate selections for elementary schools, middle schools and high schools.⁽⁶⁾
- Advertising messages are consistent with and reinforce the objectives of the education and nutrition environment goals of the school.
- Advertising of foods or beverages in the areas accessible to students during meal times must be consistent with established nutrition environment standards.⁽¹⁾

Eating Environment

- The National Association of State Boards of Education recommends that students should be provided adequate time to eat lunch, at least 10 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch, from the time the student is seated. (3)
- Lunch periods are scheduled as near the middle of the school day as possible. Recess for elementary grades is scheduled before lunch. (8)
- Cafeterias include enough serving areas so that students do not have to spend too much time waiting in line.
- Dining areas are attractive and have enough space for seating all students. (10)
- Drinking water is available for students at meals.
- Food is not used as a reward or a punishment for student behaviors, unless it is detailed in a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Child Nutrition Operations

- The child nutrition program will aim to be financially self-supporting. However, the program is an essential educational support activity. Budget neutrality or profit generation will not take precedence over the nutritional needs of the students. If subsidy of the child nutrition fund is needed, it will not be from the sale of foods that have minimal nutritional value and/or compete nutritionally with program meals. (1) (8)
- The child nutrition program will ensure that all students have affordable access to the varied and nutritious foods they need to stay healthy and learn well. (1)
- The school will strive to increase participation in the available federal Child Nutrition programs (e.g. school lunch, school breakfast, after-school snack and summer foodservice programs).
- Employ a food service director, who is properly qualified, certified and/or credentialed according to current professional standards, to administer the school food service program and satisfy reporting requirements. (1)
- All food service personnel shall have adequate pre-service training in food service operations. (1)
- A child's need for nutrients does not end when school does. (1) Therefore, recommend offering meals during breaks in the school calendar and to coordinate with other agencies and community groups to operate, or assist with operating, a summer food service program for children and adolescents who are eligible for federal program support.
- Students are encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast.



Food Safety/Food Security

- All foods made available on campus comply with the state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines are implemented to prevent food illness in schools. (1)
- For the safety and security of the food and facility access to the food service operations are limited to Child Nutrition staff and authorized personnel. For further guidance see the US Department of Agriculture food security guidelines. (4)

References

- (1) Action for Healthy Kids, Arizona State Team. Arizona healthy school environment model policy. Available at: www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/CERU/Guidelines/CERU-0401-210-RCC.pdf. Accessed March 7, 2005.
- (2) National Association for Sport and Physical Education. Physical activity for children: A statement of guidelines for children ages 5-12. Available at: http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/template.cfm?template=pr_123103.html. Accessed March 7, 2005.
- (3) National Association of State Boards of Education. Fit, healthy and ready to learn. Available at: <http://www.nasbe.org/HealthySchools/fitthealthy.html>. Accessed March 7, 2005.
- (4) United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service. Food safety and emergency preparedness. Available at: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Security_&_Emergency_Preparedness/index.asp. Accessed March 7, 2005.
- (5) Alabama Action for Healthy Kids. Guide to healthy school parties. Available at: http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/AFHK/team_center/team_public_view.php?team=AL. Accessed March 7, 2005.
- (6) Alabama Action for Healthy Kids. Guide to healthy school fundraising. Available at: http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/AFHK/team_center/team_public_view.php?team=AL. Accessed March 7, 2005.
- (7) Texas Agriculture Commission. Creating a course for change. Available at: http://www.squaremeals.org/fn/home/page/0,1248,2348_0_0_0,00.html. Accessed March 7, 2005.
- (8) Seattle Public Schools. Breakfast and lunch program. Available at: <http://www.seattleschools.org/area/news/x40903nr.xml?wrapper=0>. Accessed March 7, 2005.



- (9) Seattle Public Schools. Distribution and sales of competitive foods. Available at: <http://www.seattleschools.org/area/news/x40903nr.xml?wrapper=0>. Accessed March 7, 2005.
- (10) Wisconsin Association of School Boards. Promoting healthy eating and physical activity. Available at: <http://www.wasb.org/policy/focusoct03.html>. Accessed March 7, 2005.
- (11) Getlinger, Mary Jane, et al., Food waste is reduced when elementary-school children have recess before lunch. Journal of the American Dietetic Association, September 1996 * Volume 96 * Number 9 * p906 to p908

Glossary

Food Security	Having adequate resources to access enough food to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle. The state of having the food supply safe from harm.
Food made available on campus	Foods available on campus includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vending machines• Beverage contracts• Fundraisers• Concession stands• Student stores• School parties/celebrations• Child nutrition programs

Resources

Keys to Excellence: <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/KEYS.aspx?ID=1158>

Nutrition Integrity: <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Index.aspx?id=1107>

Action for Healthy Kids: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/>

National Association for Sport and Physical Education: <http://www.aahperd.org>

National Association of State Boards of Education: <http://www.nasbe.org>

United States Department of Agriculture-Team Nutrition: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/>

Centers for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/>

Food and Research Action Center: www.frac.org

Journal of the American Dietetic Association, February 2005: Nutrition and the School Environment.

Alabama Action for Healthy Kids:

http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/AFHK/team_center/team_public_view.php?team=AL.

Texas Department of Agriculture: Square Meals <http://www.squaremeals.org/>

Seattle Public Schools: <http://www.seattleschools.org/area/news/x40903nr.xml?wrapper=0>.

Wisconsin Association of School Boards. Promoting healthy eating and physical activity:
<http://www.wasb.org/policy/focusoct03.html>

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